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DEF 12-5 ISR

FRANCO-ISRAELI MISSILE AGREEMENT

JOHN FINNEY PIECE IN JAN 7 NYTIMES ENTITLED "ISRAEL REPORTED PREPARING TO BUY FRENCH MISSILES" ELICITED FRENCH REACTION REPORTED BY AFP IN FOLLOWING TERMS:

AUTHORIZED SOURCES, COMMENTING REPORTS IN AMERICAN PRESS ACCORDING WHICH FRANCE CONCLUDED SECRET AGREEMENT SUPPLY MEDIUM-RANGE MISSILES TO ISRAEL, NOTE THAT "GOF HAS NOT OBJECTED TO COOPERATION PRIVATE FRENCH FIRMS IN ISRAELI R AND D WORK ON SUCH ROCKETS"

PAGE 2 RUFHPA 213
BY MAKING AVAILABLE SPECIALIZED PERSONNEL.

CONTRARY TO US REPORTS HOWEVER, DELIVERIES OF FRENCH ROCKETS OF DIAMANT TYPE NOT IN QUESTION, AND NUCLEAR DEVICES ABSOLUTELY NOT INVOLVED. THERE ARE CONSEQUENTLY NO DELIVERIES OF MATERIAL BUT THERE IS COOPERATION IN RESEARCH FIELD WHICH NOT NEW DEVELOPMENT.

IN THIS CONNECTION IT SHOULD BE RECALLED THAT ROCKETS BEING BUILT IN UAR AND THAT FRANCE REMAINS ATTACHED TO POLICY SERVING PEACE, STABILITY AND EQUILIBRIUM OF NEAR EAST, AND BACKS PRINCIPLE NON-PROLIFERATION NUCLEAR WEAPONS. EMBASSY COMMENT FOLLOWS.
MCBRIDE
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NOTE: Advance copy to S/S-O at 11:27 AM, Passed White House at 12:05 PM, 1/7/66.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [illegible] DATE 3/1/78
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In response to Mr. Makkawi's questions about U.AR. missile activities, Mr. Symmes said it was well known that the USG is opposed to the proliferation of nuclear and sophisticated weapons in the Near East whether by contributions to indigenous missile programs or acquisition of material from abroad. As the Department press officer stated January 10 in answer to queries about a Hedrick Smith article (New York Times) on U.S. scientists in Cairo, while the U.S. cannot prevent American scientists from working for foreign governments, the release of technological information is subject to export license regulations. We have no information that any U.S. citizens capable of making significant contributions are working in the U.A.R. missile program. Regarding nuclear arms, Mr. Symmes responded to Mr. Makkawi that Israel is not making a weapon as far as we know. Israeli officials have said Israel would not be the first to introduce atomic weapons into the area.

Mr. Makkawi said that Lebanon will be talking with the French Government about its concern over these missile assistance reports but would like to see the U.S. weigh in with France on the missile story. Mr. Symmes replied he did not know what if anything we would discuss with the French on this matter. Mr. Symmes suggested that the considerable publicity over a period of several years by the U.A.R. on its own missile effort might limit what an Arab country could say to France about its reported arrangements with Israel. It takes two to tango. Was Mr. Makkawi suggesting missiles were all right for the U.A.R. but not for Israel? Mr. Makkawi replied it was his personal view that if the U.A.R. had significant missiles Nasser would not be parading them. Israel's efforts would be successful. Mr. Symmes said he did not want his remarks interpreted as justification of Israeli policy but it was in the logic of the situation that with continued, heavy Soviet arms shipments into the area and the vaunted U.A.R. missile efforts Israel might feel forced to develop sophisticated weapons. Mr. Makkawi said he believed that the world community should attempt a solution of the basic problem, namely, "Palestine." Mr. Symmes said the USG had attempted many solutions and partial solutions in the past and is still open to any new suggestions on how to approach the problem. We had found we can do little without the cooperation of the states involved.

Mr. Makkawi asked whether the U.S. had taken any steps in the Iraq-Iran problem. Mr. Symmes replied we see the situation as involving two friendly states, that there are limits to what we can do, and that we have urged restraint on both sides.

In response to Mr. Makkawi's query about the status of Lebanon's request for PL-480 Title IV, Mr. Symmes replied that in consultation with our Embassy in Beirut we continue actively to explore the possibilities.